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AUTHOR Cornwell, Steve; McKay, Tonia
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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the utility of a measure for assessing the writing apprehension of Japanese students of English as a second language. The Daly-Miller questionnaire, designed to measure writing apprehension, was translated into Japanese and administered to 687 first- and second-year students of English at a Japanese junior college. Results indicated four factors affecting the questionnaire's construct validity: negative perceptions about writing ability; enjoyment of writing; fear of evaluation; and showing one's writing to others. It also found significant correlations between writing apprehension and scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and between writing apprehension and high school writing experience. Future research using the questionnaire is discussed. The questionnaire's English version is appended. (Contains 18 references.) (MSE)

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Measuring Writing Apprehension in Japan

Steve Cornwell & Tonia McKay

Abstract

Writing Apprehension has been given considerable attention in L1 research, but remains to be examined extensively in L2 writing research. Daly and Miller (1975) have created and validated a questionnaire measuring Writing Apprehension in L1, but such a measure does not yet exist in L2. A validated measure of Writing Apprehension for L2 would benefit students and teachers alike by identifying hindrances to academic success, and providing a basis by which to develop teaching methodologies which would lower apprehension. This paper describes a process to validate a translated Daly-Miller questionnaire for Japanese students of English. The study found four factors and significant correlations between Writing Apprehension and the TOEFL Test of Written English scores, and between Writing Apprehension and High School writing experience. Finally, the paper presents future research plans using the questionnaire.

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Measuring Writing Apprehension in Japan

Steve Cornwell & Tonia McKay

Introduction

There is an emphasis placed on writing at Osaka Jogakuin Junior College (OJJC). In their first year "English Composition" classes students learn to write paragraphs and short essays using six rhetorical patterns; then in their second year they write 7-10 page documented research papers in content-based "Topic Studies" classes. Second year students write a total of 4 papers over the year and must receive a passing score on each paper in order to graduate. However, students sometimes have trouble making the transition from short essays to longer, documented research papers. (Cornwell & McKay, 1997) As liaisons of one of the content-based courses and the composition course, respectively, we are very interested in the affective variables which may help or hinder students successful transition to academic papers. Our interest in the topic of this paper, measuring writing apprehension, first arose out of research we were conducting on how to make a bridge between first year composition classes and the second year academic paper classes.

In a review of literature, writing apprehension appeared as an area of considerable research in L1 (Frankinburger, 1991; Buley-Meissner, 1989; Hollandsworth, 1988; Beatty & Payne, 1985; Daly, 1985; Book, 1976; Daly, & Miller, 1975) but one of little research in L2 and virtually none in EFL settings. One L1 study that often appears as a source for other studies on Writing Apprehension is Daly and Miller's, "The empirical development of an instrument to measure writing apprehension." (1975) Some language educators feel that teachers intuitively know that writing apprehension exists and that there is no need to measure it empirically (Blanton, 1987); however, we feel that a valid measurement of writing apprehension in L2 may be of help to teachers and researchers. A valid measurement of writing

apprehension could identify "at risk" writers, predict academic success, and present benchmarks to measure treatments designed to lower writing apprehension.

This paper describes the first steps in replicating the Daly- Miller study in an attempt to validate the Daly-Miller questionnaire for Japanese students of English. It consists of four parts. First, the original Daly Miller study is briefly described. Next, the process of developing and administering the translated questionnaire is presented along with descriptive statistics. Then, the four factors which were found, and the correlations between Writing Apprehension and TOEFL Test of Written English scores, and Writing Apprehension and High School writing experience are discussed. Finally, we will list future research that can be done using the questionnaire.

Original Daly & Miller questionnaire

Daly and Miller (1975) designed a 26-item questionnaire to measure writing apprehension. They then took steps to show that it was both a valid and reliable instrument. Briefly, the steps they took were as follows. After looking at then current measurements of communication apprehension/ speaking apprehension/ receiver apprehension (McCroskey, 1970; Heston & Paterline, 1974; Wheeles, 1974), Daly and Miller developed a 63 item, Likert-type scale (5 possible responses) questionnaire and administered it to 164 undergraduate composition and interpersonal communication students. The results were submitted to principle components factor analysis with orthogonal rotation. A one-factor solution was generated and after dropping items that did not load above .57 and rerunning the factor analysis, they selected 26 items all of which loaded above .60, and accounted for .46 of the variance. Next, the reliability of the instrument was tested by both split half and test-retest methods. The split half reliability was reported at .940, while the test-retest reliability over a week was reported at .923. Scores can range from a low of 26 to a high of 130. Daly & Miller's sample had a mean score

of 79.28 with a standard deviation of 18.86.

Replicating the study

There have only been a few attempts to measure writing apprehension in L2, all of which have used modified versions of the Daly-Miller instrument. (Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Phillips, 1989; Masny &Foxall, 1992) However, none of them have translated the instrument into the students' L1, nor have they reported on attempts to validate the instrument with their subjects--L2 students.

As a first step in replicating the Daly Miller study, we had a Japanese colleague translate the questionnaire and instructions into Japanese (See appendix one for the English version). In doing so we had to change some questions. For example, question number two, "I have no fear of my writing being evaluated" if translated directly into Japanese would consistently cause students to answer "incorrectly." We also added the phrase "in English" so as to be clear that we were talking about writing in English not Japanese. Finally, we added three questions about students' writing experience at the sentence, paragraph, and essay level, while in high school. We also asked if any students studied abroad and if so for how long.

After compiling the questionnaire, we administered it to 736 students at OJJC including all composition students (primarily first year) and all Topic Studies I students (second year and above). Forty-nine students did not complete the entire questionnaire and are not included in the total count in table one. We asked teachers to administer the questionnaire as close to the beginning of the semester as possible as we didn't want students to become more apprehensive after learning what the writing requirements of their respective classes were.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for all students who

completed the questionnaire. The statistics are broken down by all students, first year students, and second year students. The distribution for both years was a normal bell curve. Eleven students did not indicate whether they were first year or second year students; this accounts for the discrepancy between all (N = 687), first year (n = 353), and second year (n = 323).

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Err	Count	Min.	Max.
All	80.221	13.008	.496	687	38	121
1st yr	80.816	12.138	.646	353	40	118
2nd yr	79.786	13.996	.779	323	38	121

In addition to these statistics, over 75% of the first year students reported little or no writing experience beyond the sentence level while in high school. Fifty of the students studied abroad for at least one year.

Brown (1988) reports three common methods to report reliability: test-retest, equivalent forms, and internal consistency reliabilities. Because of the large number of students we initially didn't want to administer the test twice (test-retest); instead we intended to show the questionnaire's internal consistency through a split half reliability test. "Internal consistency reliability can be estimated in a number of ways, but the easiest method to understand conceptually is the split half method...[it has] the distinct advantage of being estimable from a single form of a test administered only once..." (Brown, 1988, p. 99). Therefore, to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire the split-half method was used following the description in Hatch and Lazaraton (1991). A correlation of .78 was obtained for the half test and using Spearman-Brown prophecy formula the reliability of the fill questionnaire was found to be .8876 (N=701, M = 80.08, and SD =

12.81). In Daly and Miller's study the mean score was 79.28 with a standard deviation of 18.86.

Factors and Coorelations

Since this study was concerned with validating an existing L1 questionnaire in Japanese, we were primarily interested in construct validity, which we examined through factor analysis. We found four factors. Ten items loaded on the first factor, labeled Negative Perceptions about Writing Ability. This factor appears to tap students perception about their ability when writing and to successfully complete work in a writing class. The second factor included six items and was labeled Enjoyment of Writing. The third factor consisted of four items and was labeled Fear of Evaluation. There were six items included in factor four which was labeled Showing My Writing to Others. Appendix Two shows the questionnaire items sorted by factors.

High school writing experience was examined by dividing students deemed to have little high school writing experience ($n = 91$) and a lot of high school writing experience ($n = 102$) into two groups. Group membership was determined by those falling one standard deviation above or below the mean. An ANOVA showed significant differences between the groups: $F(1, 191) = 33.65$, $p < .000$.

The relationship between Writing Apprehension and the TWE was compared by dividing second year students into groups according to Writing Apprehension. Once again group membership was determined by those falling one standard deviation above and below the mean. An ANOVA showed that the TWE scores for High Apprehensives and Low Apprehensives were significantly different $F(1, 63) = 8.6678$ $p < .0045$.

Two significant correlations that are of interest to this study are those between high school writing experience and Writing Apprehension, and the Test of English as a Foreign Language's (TOEFL) Test of Written English (TWE). High school writing experience and Writing Apprehension were negatively correlated at .-2578, indicating that students with less experience in writing in high school are more apprehensive. The TWE and low and high Writing Apprehension also were negatively correlated. Their correlation was -.3478.

Conclusion

This study has taken the first steps in validating a measurement for Japanese students of English, and it has done so in the students' L1, Japanese. The following are future questions that could be examined using the questionnaire.

Is there any correlation between their performance on an in-house placement test and writing apprehension?

Do students who take elective courses that require large amounts of writing have higher or lower levels of apprehension?

Is it possible to create a treatment to help high apprehensive students lower their apprehension level?

Studies in L1 have shown that writing apprehension is negatively correlated with success in writing, (Frankinburger, 1991) so we hope that this measurement will be able to identify students that may be at risk of doing poorly in writing. By designing and administering a treatment to lower students' apprehension, we may be able to help them become more successful than they would be without any help. This instrument will help us measure any effect of such a treatment.

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Appendix One: Modified Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Questionnaire

Teachers' English copy of Writing Apprehension Survey

Directions: Below are a series of statements about writing in English. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you when writing in English by circling whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are uncertain, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with the statement. While some of these statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

strongly agree agree uncertain disagree strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5

1. I avoid writing. 1 2 3 4 5

2. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated. 1 2 3 4 5

3. I look forward to writing down my ideas. 1 2 3 4 5

4. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated. 1 2 3 4 5

5. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience. 1 2 3 4 5

6. Handing in a composition makes me feel good. 1 2 3 4 5

7. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition. 1 2 3 4 5

8. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time. 1 2 3 4 5

9. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication. 1 2 3 4 5

10. I like to write my ideas down. 1 2 3 4 5

11. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing. 1 2 3 4 5

12. I like to have my friends read what I have written. 1 2 3 4 5

13. I'm nervous about writing. 1 2 3 4 5

14. People seem to enjoy what I write. 1 2 3 4 5

15. I enjoy writing. 1 2 3 4 5

16. I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas. 1 2 3 4 5

17. Writing is a lot of fun. 1 2 3 4 5

18. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them. 1 2 3 4 5

19.	I like seeing my thoughts on paper.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	When I hand in a composition I know I'm going to do poorly.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	It's easy for my to write good compositions.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I don't think I write as well as most other people.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I'm no good at writing.	1	2	3	4	5

[Note: modified portion begins here]

In high school how much writing experience did you have with the following:

Sentences	4	3	2	1
Paragraphs	4	3	2	1
Essays	4	3	2	1

Did you study abroad in a academic school? If yes, for how long?

Name: Student ID: Class:

Appendix Two

Questions arranged according to factors with percentages of answers

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Factor One: Negative Perceptions about Writing Ability					
26. I'm no good at writing.	21.0	42.0	19.5	16.0	1.6
24. I don't think I write as well as most other people.	18.3	45.3	24.1	11.1	1.3
11. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.	.6	5.0	25.8	42.3	26.1
22. When I hand in a composition I know I'm going to do poorly.	7.0	20.0	38.1	30.5	4.4
16. I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas.	15.0	37.5	20.3	24.0	3.3
21. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.	19.5	46.1	18.5	14.8	1.0
7. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition.	4.6	19.3	14.7	49.8	11.7
23. It's easy for my to write good compositions.	.3	2.9	8.4	52.5	35.9
18. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.	7.7	25.2	40.6	21.3	5.1
13. I'm nervous about writing.	11.8	35.1	19.6	27.4	6.1
Factor Two: Enjoyment of Writing					
15. I enjoy writing.	8.1	41.9	31.1	15.8	3.0
17. Writing is a lot of fun.	7.0	32.4	32.1	25.8	2.7
3. I look forward to writing down my ideas.	7.7	26.1	29.5	30.7	6.0
10. I like to write my ideas down.	5.7	25.7	34.7	30.7	3.3
1. I avoid writing.	2.6	22.3	15.7	48.8	10.7
8. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.	.4	.9	4.1	40.2	54.4

Factor Three: Fear of Evaluation

4.	I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.				
	11.1	27.2	13.9	36.4	11.4
25.	I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.				
	8.3	17.8	18.1	43.5	12.3
2.	I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.				
	10.3	27.0	10.7	37.7	14.4
5.	Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.				
	2.0	6.1	11.6	46.9	33.4

Factor Four: Showing My Writing to Others

12.	I like to have my friends read what I have written.				
	2.6	14.6	24.4	45.0	13.6
20.	Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.				
	6.1	30.0	35.8	24.1	4.0
19.	I like seeing my thoughts on paper.				
	6.4	32.2	40.4	17.7	3.3
14.	People seem to enjoy what I write.				
	.6	3.4	49.6	31.6	15.1
9.	I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.				
	1.0	7.6	35.9	37.8	17.7
6.	Handing in a composition makes me feel good.				
	5.8	24.3	29.8	34.4	5.7

Note: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Uncertain; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree